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012128Z Apr 05

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000502

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/W
STATE FOR CA/OCS/SDENYER
STATE FOR EB/ESC/IEC/ENR/BLEVINE
STATE FOR DS/IP/AF
STATE FOR INR/AA
STATE PASS DOE FOR DAS JBRODMAN AND CGAY
STATE PASS TREASURY FOR ASEVERENS AND SRENENDER
STATE PASS DOC FOR PHUPER
STATE PASS TRANSPORTATION FOR MARAD
STATE PASS OPIC FOR CDUFFY
STATE PASS TDA FOR BTERNET
STATE PASS EXIM FOR JRICHTER
STATE PASS USTR FOR ASST USTR SLISER
STATE PASS USAID FOR GWEYNAND AND SLAWAETZ

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/01/2015

TAGS: [EPET](#) [EINV](#) [CASC](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [MOPS](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: TIDEX STRIKE CONTINUES; MISSION RAMPS UP EFFORTS
TO INTERVENE

REF: LAGOS 494

Classified By: Consul General Brian L. Browne for Reasons 1.4 (D & E)

Summary

1. (C) Striking Tidex employees continue to prevent Tidex vessels and non-Nigerian crew members (approximately 45-50 expatriates), including thirteen AMCITs, from leaving the ports of Onne, Escravos and Brass. Tidex now states thirteen, not seventeen AMCITs, are aboard the detained vessels. There are 10 AMCITs on seven ships at Onne (Rivers State), and three AMCITs on two ships at Escravos (Delta State). There are no reports of injuries. Mission has obtained the names of the AMCITs, as well as the names and locations of the vessels involved. The Nigerian strikers prevented a Cameroonian-crewed ship from departing Onne Port today, and have threatened to occupy Tidex's Lagos office on April 4. Mission continues to speak with federal, state, labor, and military contacts to resolve the situation peacefully.

Number of Detained Americans Lowered to 13;
All AMCITs and Expats Safe

2. (C) Mission has been in continuous contact with Tidex Managing Director Vaughn. All AMCITs and other expatriates remain unharmed. Vaughn now confirms thirteen AMCITs are aboard the detained vessels. Reports of the total number of ships involved have fluctuated, but Vaughn has confirmed 10 AMCITs are on board seven ships of the eleven ships at Onne, and three AMCITs are on board two of the four ships held at Escravos. Vaughn reports no Americans aboard the vessel at Brass. We do not have any information on the identities of third-country national (British, Filipino, Cameroonian, and other) crew members, nor a complete list of all of the detained vessels.

No Progress in Negotiations;
Strikers Threaten Office Occupation

3. (C) MD Vaughn stated that NUPENG and PENGASSAN sent representatives to meet with Tidex management today. However, in line with corporate policy, the management team refuses to meet until the strikers return to work (or at least release the expatriate workers and the vessels unharmed). In response, the strikers have threatened to occupy Tidex's Lagos office on April 4. We have advised Tidex to take appropriate security precautions in light of this possible action.

Cameroonians Prevented from Leaving Onne

4. (C) Two vessels at Onne, the Columbia Seahorse and Princess Tide, are Cameroonian-registered and crewed. One of the Cameroonian vessels attempted to depart Onne Port today, but the Nigerian strikers threatened the Captain, and prevented the ship from leaving. The Nigerian Navy had offered to escort the Cameroonian vessels out of the port. We have cautioned the senior Naval Officer in the area against any precipitous action that may result in harm to person or property. The situations in Escravos and Brass are reported calm.

Navy Contacts Understand Need to Avoid Violence;
Report Strikers Not Armed

15. (C) DATT has been in contact with Captain Oraka, Commander of the Nigerian naval base in Port Harcourt, and his second-in-command, Lieutenant Commander (LCDR) Namiri (phonetic) most of the day. LCDR Namiri said they understood the USG and Tidex desire to avoid the use of force, and indicated the military will not do anything to provoke the strikers. LCDR Namiri has visited the Cameroonian vessels Columbia Seahorse and Princess Tide, as well as the Ed Kylie, which is captained by an AMCIT, with three AMCITs on board. LCDR reported the strikers did not appear to be armed and were not/not threatening the non-Nigerian crew members. Mission Making Other Contacts for Peaceful Resolution

16. (C) Meanwhile, Mission continues to explore avenues for intervention by intermediaries to resolve the situation peacefully. The Consul General has spoken with both Rivers State Governor Peter Odili and Bayelsa State Governor Diepreye Alamieyeseigha to express our concern regarding the safety of the AMCITs, and our desire have a peaceful resolution of this matter (i.e., the expatriate crew and the vessels should be released, and negotiations over the labor issues moved to a more orthodox venue - a conference table.) The two Governors promised to monitor the situation, and to make sure no rash actions are taken; they offered to mediate if necessary. Econ Off spoke with the Nigerian Labor Congress President Adams Oshiomole, who promised to use his good offices to help resolve the situation. Embassy is also attempting to meet the National Security Advisor.

BROWNE